

# Next Speaker of Congress

Quaint Stories That Are Illustrative of the Interesting Personality of "Uncle Joe" Cannon of Illinois, Who Will Succeed Henderson of Iowa.

It is practically decided that Congressman Joseph G. Cannon of the Twelfth Illinois district will be the next speaker of congress. He will succeed Colonel David B. Henderson of Iowa. Mr. Cannon has been in the house for about a quarter of a century, and is one of the best known men in the United States. The following story is taken from the Chicago Inter-Ocean.

CONGRESSMAN Joseph G. Cannon was walking along State street a few days ago when an aged man rushed up to his side and seized him by the hand. He was an old friend of Mr. Cannon's, but never before had the congressman seen him in such a hurried state.

"What on earth has happened to you?" asked Mr. Cannon. "Why, the fact of the matter is," panted the friend, "I saw your back when you were a block away from me, and I have been breaking my neck trying to catch up with you."

"But how did you recognize my back at such a distance?" "That's a very simple question to answer," replied the friend, who by this time was beginning to regain his breath. "I'm not a Sherlock Holmes by any means, but when I saw your back bobbing along in the crowd some mysterious sense told me that it looked very familiar. Then I took a second glance and saw a lot of mud on your coat."

"That settled it. I knew instantly that it was you, because whenever you come to Chicago in bad weather you always bring a few specks of Dublin mud along with you. It is a parting token bestowed at the depot by the wheels of your carriage."

"Uncle Joe" smiled, but made no attempt to remove the mud. Perhaps in all the din and clatter of a busy city, he enjoyed flaunting a signal of his native heath. At any rate, he exchanged courtesies with his friend and then turned and strode down the street, a figure strikingly distinct from the nervous and eager pedestrians surging round him.

The friend hastened over to his club and told his associates that he had just left the next speaker of the house of representatives.

"I wish you would tell me what Mr. Cannon looks like," said a younger member of the club. The older men laughed.

"My boy," he said, "to be candid with you, 'Uncle Joe' is not what you smart people would call a Beau Brummel. In fact, I don't believe he could make the handsomest member of congress."

"His whiskers are of the 'Rube' type. They grow back of his ears and under his chin. I've seen him walk, and a big, prominent nose looking at you above the fringe of gray hirsute appendages."

"Then 'Uncle Joe' is bald—almost as bald as a billiard ball, except that down around his neck he has a fringe of gray hair like in color to his whiskers. He stoops when he walks, and when he talks, and when he stands, and when he sits. His vest always has the appearance of being too long in front, because it wrinkles. It's because of that stoop."

"His trousers usually wrinkle above the shoes and at the knees. It's because of that stoop. He has a shuffling walk at times and a peculiar way of throwing his legs. His hands are knotted and rough. He usually wears a dangle watch chain of gold, and while he is immaculately neat and clean as to his linen, and wears a soft black bow tie carefully tied, no one would ever pick him out as an exceptionally well-dressed man, or a man who gave any thought to his apparel."

"That's all that can be said of his personal appearance, good or bad. Acquaintance with him will lead to forgetfulness of the outer man. Those forcible gestures, that not unpleasant, though strong, voice, that hearty way in which the slap on the back is administered; that direct and unequivocal way of putting things; that hearty laugh; that quaint story of homely illustration are the things remembered about the next speaker of the house of representatives."

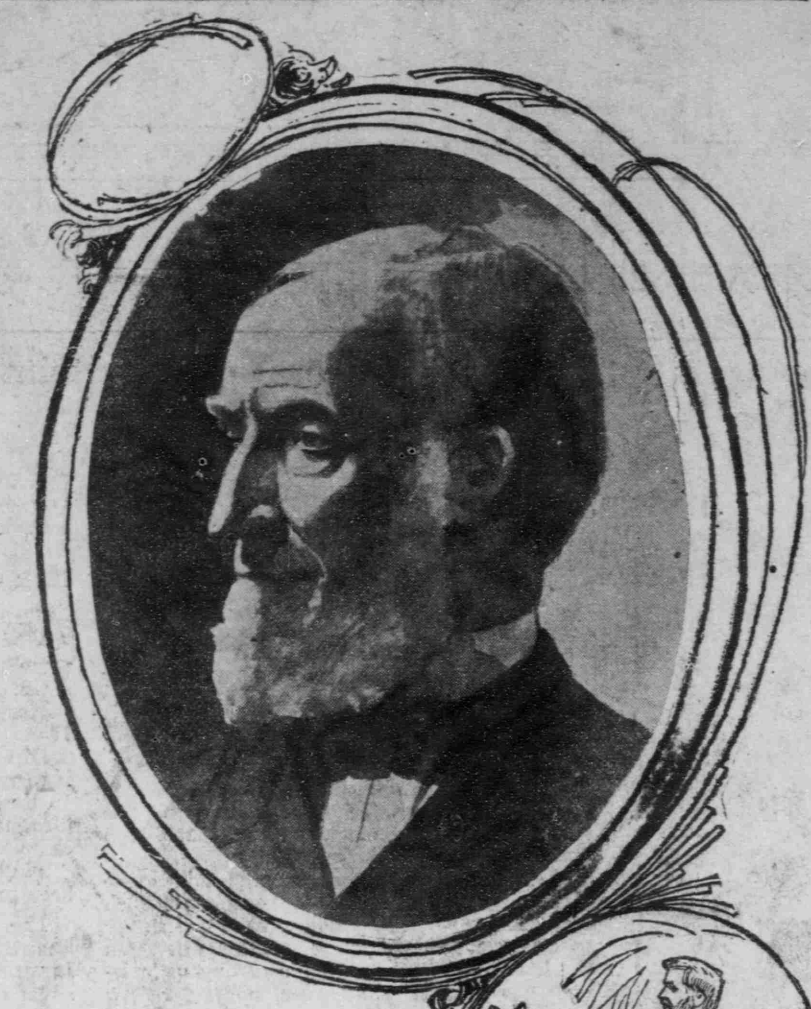
While the clubman's description of Mr. Cannon is an interesting one, there is another in the congressional directory that furnishes a compact insight into his career. Here is the way it reads: "Joseph G. Cannon—Republican, of Danville, was born at Guilford, N. C., May 7, 1826; is a lawyer, and a statesman in Illinois, March 1861, to December, 1868; was elected to the Forty-third, Forty-fourth, Forty-fifth, Forty-sixth, Forty-seventh, Forty-eighth, Forty-ninth, Fiftieth, Fifty-first, Fifty-third, Fifty-fourth, Fifty-fifth, Fifty-sixth congresses, and re-elected to the Fifty-seventh congress, receiving 80,633 votes, to 19,226 for C. M. Gaiser, Democrat, and 1,039 for J. M. Gaiser, Prohibitionist."

When the Fifty-eighth congress assembled Mr. Cannon will undoubtedly be chosen as speaker to succeed David B. Henderson. This place will be exactly to his liking. He is a shrewd parliamentarian, and knows all the ins and outs of congressional tactics better than any other public man.

Mr. Cannon has been elected to congress fifteen times. That is several times more than any other member of the present body. He is, therefore, the "father of the house." He has been "Uncle Joe" to everybody in Washington for a score of years, and while regarded as the fiercest fighter in the house, he has done more kindly acts for other members and outsiders than any man in congress.

Mr. Cannon was once defeated for congress. He went down with the Republican crash in 1890, after the passage of the McKinley bill. He had good company. McKinley was defeated the same year. So were scores of Republican leaders in the west. Mr. Cannon was also defeated for speaker in the Fifty-first congress. So was McKinley. Thomas B. Reed was elected. McKinley became chairman of the committee on ways and means, and Cannon became chairman of the committee on appropriations. In every Republican congress since then Cannon has been chairman of his old committee, and as such he has had more power and responsibility regarding appropriations for government expenses and public works than any other member of either house.

Mr. Cannon was not a lingo before the war with Spain began. He was one of the conservatives. He knew that war meant big appropriations and increased debt, rather than economy and the continuance of paying off bonded indebtedness. But when the battleship Maine was blown up in Havana harbor, "Uncle Joe" said little on either side. He began making a few figures, and one morning he quietly dropped a little bill in the box, which, when found, created a sensation.



Joseph G. Cannon.

tion, not only in Washington, but in every city in the civilized world.

That bill was unique. It had no precedent. It appropriated \$50,000,000 for public defense, and placed that sum at the disposal of the president. It meant that the nation would get ready for war, and it directed the president to take steps to that end. It was passed without a dissenting vote by the house. There were speeches, but they were all for the bill. In the senate there were no speeches, but it passed by unanimous vote also.

Cannon's bill was the first sign that the United States intended to fight. It was not bluster. It was more important than the Uncle Sam's bluster off his coat. The bill was illustrative of "Uncle Joe's" character. He wanted to keep out of war so long as it seemed possible to avoid it. But when war became inevitable, "Uncle Joe" thought as he would think in a game of poker. There was need for a good bluff, and a bluff that could be backed up if

There were other nations in Europe that were encouraging Spain. It seemed possible that some of them might feel encouraged to take a hand in the scrap. "Uncle Joe" gave Europe a sample of American readiness for fight by having congress hand over \$50,000,000 to the president. It startled the world, as Mr. Cannon meant that it should. It was a bluff, not meant for Spain, but for the other European powers. It answered its purpose.

The powers that were friendly to Spain became cautious regarding unfriendly acts toward the United States. They did not care to offend a power that could take \$50,000,000 out of the treasury in this emergency, while the first step of a European government would be a loan or an issue of bonds.

"Uncle Joe" does many things in this way—a way that is more familiar to poker players than to other men. He tests the opposition with a bluff. Mr. Cannon was born in a Quaker settlement of North Carolina. When he was 4 years old his father, Dr. Horace F. Cannon, emigrated to the banks of the Wabash at Bloomington, Pa. Cannon was born in 1826. He was 14 years old when his father died, and at that age he started out for himself, his first work being as clerk in a country store. He was so clever until he had attained his majority, when he began the study of law, and was admitted to the bar at Terre Haute in 1848.

The next year Mr. Cannon moved to Tuscola, Ill., and in 1851 he was elected district attorney. He held that office for seven years, or until 1858, and in 1852 he was elected to congress from that district.

It was at that time that Joe Cannon began to figure in national affairs. The district has been changed twice since his first election, but Mr. Cannon still represents a large part of the territory which was in his first district. He has had rivals in his own party who sought the nomination for congress, but they always failed, and said that "Uncle Joe" had a machine. He had. It extended throughout the district and included the ablest and most influential Republicans in every county. It was an invincible machine, because it took in most of those who made up the Republican party in this district. The strongest Democrats were nominated against Mr. Cannon, but they were defeated for nine consecutive elections, and for eighteen years "Uncle Joe" was undisturbed in his congressional seat.

Then came the McKinley law, which he helped frame and pass, and after that the Democratic deluge, which began in 1890. It caught "Uncle Joe" as it caught others—notably McKinley and Gear and Post and Adams—so many, in fact, that the Democrats had an overwhelming majority in the next congress. "Uncle Joe" was left at home for two years, and his seat was occupied by a Democrat. No one now remembers who this Democrat was, but they do remember that his presence only made the loss of "Uncle Joe" the more conspicuous.

When this defeat became known Major McKinley and Mr. Cannon were at the congressional headquarters in Chicago. The news of the Democratic landslide brought many of their colleagues in the house to them with words of sympathy and condolence. Each of the men presented a smiling face and both made light of their reverses, answering their colleagues with jest and humorous retort. Major Pearce, now dead, who represented one of the St. Louis districts in the congress, tells the story. After all had withdrawn but Pearce and Cannon and McKinley, "Uncle Joe" turned to McKinley, who was sitting beside him, with the remark:

"Bill, there is no use of us lying to each other, is there?"

"No, Joe," answered McKinley.

"Well, it's hell, ain't it, Bill?"

"Yes, Joe," said the future president.

The state of Illinois did not recover from its attack of Democracy until 1894, but "Uncle Joe" recaptured his district in 1892, and was one of the few Republicans elected from the state in that unfortunate year. He has been in the house ever since. With the exception of those two years, from 1881 to 1893, he has been a member of congress for twenty-eight years.

mons. It was a given name—the family name was not familiar. He became interested in the petition, and walked over to the Mormon's desk with his finger on this name.

"Do you know that lady?" he asked.

"The Mormon Cannon looked at the name and replied:

"Very well, indeed. She is the wife of one of our disciples, and a remarkable woman. She is a physician and a leader in Mormon circles. Do you know her?"

"What was her name before she was married, and what number is she?" "Third, seventh or fourteenth?" Uncle Joe asked.

"She is number three, I believe," laughed the Mormon, and he proceeded to answer the other questions.

Uncle Joe told the Mormon the story of his acquaintance with the woman, and asked to be remembered to her.

Five years later, when both these men were out of congress and the Mormons were protesting against the "persecution" they experienced under the Edmunds law, Joseph G. Cannon made a tour of Mexico with his daughter, returned by way of the Pacific coast and stopped off to see the Mormon city of Zion on their way home.

George Q. Cannon, then a member of the presidency of the church, showed the visitors every attention while in his city, and gave Uncle Joe his first opportunity to study the Mormon church and the social conditions which it created. He was not so much shocked as he had expected to be, but he wanted to learn the truth, and he called upon the woman who thirty-five years before told him in Indiana that she was to be sold to the Mormons. He found a handsome matron of commanding carriage and fine education and culture. She was such a woman as might conduct a salon in Washington or any other eastern city.

She greeted her visitor cordially, and laughed over the incident of years before. She defended the Mormon church and plural marriages as Mr. Cannon had never heard even George Q. Cannon, the ablest advocate of the church, defend these institutions. Her talk almost convinced him that there were two sides to this question.

Before he left Salt Lake Mr. Cannon was entertained at dinner by his friend, George Q. Cannon. There was only a small party at dinner, and afterward there was a reception. There were nearly 100 people present. There were middle-aged men of business affairs, professional men and their wives, young gentlemen and ladies, college graduates and college students, all together as brilliant a company as could be found in any other city. Mr. Cannon did not understand why he had been accorded this reception until the Mormon leader introduced him to his family, his sons and daughters, their wives and husbands, their children and grandchildren. It was a Mormon family.

With this picture and the defense of Mormonism made by the woman who had been sealed to him, Mr. Cannon's "Uncle Joe" had something of a struggle with himself before he voted to unseat Brigham Roberts, the Mormon member of congress, a year ago. But he did vote that way, because the system represented a hierarchy and not a republic, and he voted to unseat the representative of the hierarchy.

Mr. Cannon's Washington home is in a modest apartment at the Cochran, a fancy hotel a few blocks off Pennsylvania avenue. He tells a good story on himself relative to his hotel life: During the last session one of his solid constituents visited him and asked him to make the hotel more hospitable as his constituent was hospitable back in Illinois, invited him to dinner. They went to the hotel and dinner was served. It was the season for corn on the cob, and "Uncle Joe" devoted his time and attention to the plate piled high with green corn. It tasted good. He ordered another plate of the savory cereal.

When he had had his fill he pushed back from a mound of gnawed corn-cobs of respectable proportions. Then he showed his guest about the hotel, pointing out its conveniences and advantages.

It requires rare ability to handle the appropriations of the government, amounting to more than a billion dollars a year—to make the appropriations come within the revenues of the government, and so to handle them as to keep all the wheels going without charges of favoritism here or neglect in another place. The committee on appropriations must decide how the money shall be divided, and the chairman of the committee must, in large measure, be the committee. He must have a head for business affairs, for there is no other place in the government which calls for such general knowledge and detailed information regarding so many subjects. It is easy for another member to shut his eyes to the need of appropriations in other directions and insist upon a paramount importance of his own bill, but the chairman of the committee on appropriations must consider all bills alike.

"Uncle Joe" has done this so impartially that it was only in the last congress his enemies got the chance to charge him with favoritism. He secured the establishment of a new branch of the soldiers' home at his own town of Danville. That was a charge which could not stand, because the home had to be built somewhere, and the board of directors had chosen Danville as the most desirable spot. Down in Mr. Cannon's home town the people laughed.

"Uncle Joe" thinks so much of the old soldiers," they said, "that he has gone and brought them to his back door."

A good story is told of Mr. Cannon's first love affair. It was just after he quit the Annapolis academy and went to work in store on a small salary. Like many other boys, he did not realize the condition of his heart until it was too late. He went to the country and danced on the punchon floors to the music of an old fiddle, and he went sleighing and to spelling bees with a pretty girl; but he had no thought of love or matrimony until one night the girl told him she was to be sealed to a Mormon.

The Mormons were as much advertised then as they have been since, and this girl's mother, a widow, had decided to go to Utah. The one idea that came into her mind was that she would be compelled to become a plural wife, and she told her fear and grief to the poor clerk who had been her escort. Joe wanted to be a country dancer, and the girl from her impending fate, but he had been compelled to give up his ambition for an education, and his business prospects would be justified him in assuming the obligations of matrimony. He resolved to do it rather than see the girl sealed to a Mormon polygamist.

But before he could put his plans in execution the family departed for the west, and his sweetheart was lost to him forever, for she had gone to the Mormons.

Thirty years later George Q. Cannon, the Mormon delegate in congress from the territory of Utah, walked over to the desk of Joseph G. Cannon of Illinois, in the house of representatives, and asked him to examine a petition from the women of Utah. The Mormon was fighting for his seat, and he had this petition from the women of Utah testifying to their happiness and the recognition of their rights. Mr. Cannon of Illinois glanced over the petition in a casual way until his eye caught a name he had never heard since he lost his sweetheart to the Mor-

mon. The guest seemed thoughtful, and "Uncle Joe" ventured to say inquiringly: "Pretty comfortable quarters these?" His constituent looked at Joe with a twinkle and said thoughtfully: "Yes. But while we were at dinner I was just wondering why it was that you didn't put up at a lively stable and save money." The story may be a bit harsh on Mr. Cannon and give a wrong idea of the sort of man he is. He is simple in his de-

mands at the table, as he is in all his habits.

At noontime when he goes to the house restaurant he seldom eats anything more than a bowl of milk with bread carefully broken up in it, accompanied by a cup of coffee. He is of that type of men who believe that a midday meal while work is pressing upon them dulls their faculties and incapacitates them for mental effort.

That Wise Discoverer.

(New York Times.)

Columbus had been on his voyage several weeks when the sailors became frightened by the variation of the compass. "But how can you tell which way the needle points?" inquired the chief engineer, suggesting retreat. "Sit on it!" roared the angry navigator. Satisfied by the logic of the answer the dissenters withdrew while Christopher savagely boxed the compass.

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